USS Fitzgerald Returns to San Diego Following Seven-Month Underway



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following operations in the U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleets, Jan. 6, 2025 (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lordin Kelly)
From U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs, Jan. 6 2026

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returned to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following a seven-month underway to the U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation, Jan. 6, 2026.

While underway, Fitzgerald conducted a wide range of operations, including routine presence patrols and maritime security operations.

The ship participated in several multinational exercises, enhancing interoperability and strengthening partnerships with key allies, including the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Republic of Korea Navy.

Fitzgerald executed six transits of the Strait of Hormuz, ensuring freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf, and participated in major multinational exercises including MALABAR 2025 and SWARMEX 2025, enhancing interoperability and strengthened partnerships with the navies of Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the United Arab Emirates, all contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As a lethal, agile force, the Sailors aboard Fitzgerald exemplified the warrior ethos and readiness required to defend the United States and its interests at a moment’s notice.

“I am truly proud of the hard work and dedication this crew has displayed daily throughout this seven month deployment,” said Cmdr. Paul F. Richardson III, commanding officer of Fitzgerald. “Their resilience and professionalism enabled us to successfully execute every mission we were tasked with in multiple areas of operation. We are all excited to be home and reunited with our families and loved ones, whose unwavering support made this possible.”

The professionalism and resilience displayed by the crew throughout their deployment directly honored the legacy of their ship’s namesake.

Fitzgerald is named in honor of Lt. William Charles Fitzgerald, a U.S. Navy officer who was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his extraordinary heroism in the Vietnam War. The ship’s motto, “Protect Your People,” is a direct tribute to his sacrifice, when he was mortally wounded while providing covering fire for his evacuating men during an attack by Viet Cong forces.

As a multi-mission surface combatant, Fitzgerald is capable of conducting Anti-Air Warfare (AAW), Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), and Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW) operations.

As an integral part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute the U.S. Navy’s role across the full spectrum of military operations. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation and overflight, the rule of law and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.